

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - MEDICAL SUITE - DAY (TRANTOR)(PREV. 25 SHOT)

Our first look at DUSK (Cleon²³). A powerful, competent, but troubled Dusk. Older looking, but still vibrant. An IMPERIAL DOCTOR, MAYCORE tends to him, injecting something into his face, at various places, with a wide-bore needle.

DR. MAYCORE
Breathe, you're doing well. We're almost done.

Dusk winces, but is used to the pain. We reveal someone watching -- EELY KARVIS (clinging, erotically charged).

KARVIS
I love watching this. The true face of Empire revealed.

Still getting injected, Dusk speaks without moving his face:

DUSK
Yes, well, don't know why I'm bothering anymore. Ten days?! What's the point?

KARVIS
Ascension comes too soon, of late. Too soon. I don't see why they moved it.

DUSK
So. Will it be ready? Before I'm gone? Dawn's too young and Day...
(he waves a vague hand)
Without me, the new Day will need it.
Fuck dammit!

Maycore quickly withdraws the needle from the back of Dusk's neck, leaves a dark bead of liquid on the skin.

DR. MAYCORE
It would hurt less if you kept *still*.

The Doctor quails, but Dusk is occupied with his reflection--

DUSK
Ahh, here we go.

And now, we can SEE the injected nanotech working - Dusk's cheeks filling out, wrinkles smoothing, jowls disappearing...

KARVIS

When I look at you, I see you as I first saw you, a vigorous Emperor Day, reviewing the troops, and I, a small lad, standing at attention...

The Doctor covers Dusk's face with a SURGICAL MESH MASK.

DR. MAYCORE

Just lie quietly. Let the nanites do their work--

KARVIS

...standing at attention, thinking if I stood like a soldier, you might review me as well. You didn't, of course. But you were glorious and ageless. Blue and gold like an orchid, face to the sun...

DUSK

(from under the cloth)
It's burning, damn you.

DR. MAYCORE

It always passes. Just breathe.

KARVIS

Breathe. In and out.

DUSK

Thank you, Karvis. Very helpful. Get out. No, wait. Give your report.
(hint of vulnerability)
Will it be ready?

KARVIS

It will. Before your Ascension. I have every confidence.

DUSK

See, now I'm less confident. Um.

KARVIS (CONT'D)

DUSK (CONT'D)

I've used a soft voice all my life, Karvis. When he becomes Day, the boy is owed a big stick--

DR. MAYCORE

There we go...

The Doctor removes the mask. DUSK LOOKS 20 YEARS YOUNGER.

KARVIS

Ah, bravo! There he is. The sun reverses course. Helios's chariot creeps back up into the sky--

DUSK
(dryly)
Yes, I am a babe of eighty again.
Set up the hurdles, I shall sprint
down the hallway.

KARVIS
You are beautiful.

Dusk swats away Karvis's attentions--

DUSK
Fuck beauty. Just make sure the
Novacula is finished before I am.

A26 INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER (TRANTOR) A26

Dusk shuffles out the medical suite towards camera, then
shifts off screen down a hallway --

26 INT. IMP. PALACE - DUSK'S CHAMBERS - DAY (TRANTOR)(PREV. SCENE)

Dusk returns to his chambers. A TAILOR, LANDELL and her two
ASSISTANTS stand next to a mannequin with the Darkness robe
(as seen in Ep. 103) on it, awaiting his arrival.

TAILOR LANDELL
Ahh, Empire. Excellent. The final
fitting--

DUSK
Take that away.

Off their puzzled inaction. Dusk yells, startling them both.

DUSK (CONT'D)
You've had *centuries*! We're all the
same size and it's a *robe*! It will fit
and I don't care if it *doesn't* and I
don't want to fucking look at it!

The Tailors hustle away with the robes.

CUT TO: